5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
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dividual Arab is free to transfer his allegiance to another chieftain if he so desires. Such a transfer quite frequently takes place. In a loose general way each tribe has certain areas over which it grazes its camels and its goats and sheep. In proportion to the number of animals the area covered is enormous, for throughout the hot, dry summer months locations must be frequently changed and new pastures found. The prosperity of the desert Arab, poor as it is at the best, depends on a rainfall so scanty that one marvels at the existence of any life at all. There are whole districts, like the Great Southern Desert and the black plain encountered between Hasa and Riyadh, where not even the hardiest Bedouin attempts to live. In winter the temperature goes down so low that frost is seen, and in the summer the country glows with heat like a furnace. No mineral resources are known at present, and there is no reason to suppose that the most careful scientific search would find any.

Bedouins who live in the desert own a certain number of camels, and turn them out to graze over large areas. Camels require little water and can go for three days, if necessary, without a drink, an ability which adds enormously to their value in a country where it is frequently necessary to travel scores of miles to find a well. The camel is the one support of Bedouin life. Camel's milk is the principal article of diet, with a few dates for a dessert and camel's meat as an addition for feasts and high days. The hair of the camel furnishes clothes, and his back affords the only method of transportation possible in the desert. Indeed the Arab looks on the camel as God's special gift to the desert nomad, and he is not far mistaken.

Where wells are somewhat close together and the for-

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
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where wells are somewhat close together and the for- 312
age of the country allows it, goats can be kept, but these 283
must be watered at least once a day. They furnish hair 342
for tent-cloth, and thus it is the goat that shelters the
Bedouin from the elements. In districts where forage [234
and water are still more abundant, sheep are raised, 439]
chiefly for their wool or as articles of export. Mutton is 262
the favorite meat all over Arabia, and although for a les- 514
ser occasion goats or camels may answer, when a great
sheikh gives a feast, sheep are the animals slaughtered.

Much has been written, and justly, about the beauty 231
and the endurance of Arabian horses, but they are not an 556
economic asset. In Central Arabia a horse is a pure lux-
ury. Often in summer they must live on camel's milk
just as humans do. They are kept and treated as house-
hold pets and are very intelligent and affectionate. Their
only function is to furnish an aristocratic mount for
pleasure, for state occasions and for war. During part
of the year there is abundant pasturage for them, but
they are a luxury afforded only by the sheikhs and the
very rich and their number is small.

There are years in Arabia when the spring rains fail 731
partially or completely, and then the animals die by thou- 789
sands, or are driven to the nearest town to be sold for a 262
song. In such years starvation stalks abroad through the
land. Little children die because there is no food suit-
able for such tender stomachs, and the adults are even
more gaunt and thin than usual. The sheikhs are nearly
bankrupted by the number of poor they have to feed,
and the whole community waits and prays for more rain
the coming spring.

At the best the life of a desert Bedouin is one of a 511
poverty so bitter and deep that Westerners have little idea
of it. The entire outfit of a family could be bought for a
mere trifle.

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
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it on over his old one, and since none of his garments are ever removed, the older garment gradually falls to pieces and after a while disappears altogether. This story, like much of the fiction of the world, though not strictly accurate is based on painful truth, for baths are not so frequent in the Bedouin's life as they should be, and the laundering of clothes is still less adequate.

But it is easy to blame the Bedouin for being dirty. Dirty he certainly is and his clothes even more so, but what is to be expected when water is so scarce that for lack of it animals frequently go thirsty, and sometimes even men? We forget that cleanliness is a luxury, and a very expensive luxury at that. Through the summer the Bedouin women wash their hair in camel's urine because water is so precious that it cannot be wasted for such a purpose. The men apparently go without washing. Clothes require no comment, for their condition is what might be imagined. By far the commonest hunting in Arabia is the hunt for wild game in the hair and clothes. It is always successful. The ablutions required before prayers are commonly performed with sand. The delight of such people upon arriving at some place where water is abundant and where bodies and clothes can be washed is a good thing to see.

The diet of these desert Arabs is ordinarily very frugal. A drink of camel's milk and a handful of dates are a day's rations for an adult, and more is not expected. There will also be an occasional drink of coffee, of which the Bedouin is inordinately fond. Even the poorest Bedouin tent will have some sort of a battered and worn coffee pot for this purpose. Bread is a rare luxury in such homes, and meat even a rarer one. A feeble old camel on the verge of dissolution will render a last service

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Bedouin M34

to his masters in making possible a feast and a taste of meat for a large number. From camel's milk is made a sort of cottage cheese which is kneaded into little cakes much the shape and size of children's mud pies. These are plentifully mixed with hair in the process of manufacture and are baked in the sun almost to the consistency of bricks. They will keep indefinitely and form a savory addition to the diet in time of scarcity.

Occasionally the Bedouin will capture a *dhabb*, or armored lizard, and rejoice exceedingly at the kindness of Providence. Or he may succeed in catching a desert rat, or *jerboa*. In either case there will be meat to eat that night. On rarer occasions he may succeed in shooting a gazelle, and then there will be a real feast in his tent. But even at the best there is probably no community in the world that lives constantly so close to the starvation line as the Bedouin.

As a host, however, the Bedouin has no peer. The unaffected joy that is shown at the opportunity of entertaining a guest may well serve as a model for those of us who come from the more practical and unfriendly West. To sit in a Bedouin's tent and enjoy his hospitality is a pleasure to be remembered, even if the small amount of meat served with the rice be so tough that biting a piece in two is impossible, to say nothing of chewing it properly.

The very poor may sometimes flee from the demands of hospitality, but once asked they may not deny entertainment to any one. In the desert the desperately poor Bedouins avoid settling in the region of a recognized caravan track. To be compelled to entertain many guests would almost mean starvation for them, but they never refuse if a guest appears. The only alternative is to re-

21: Fisher S-4 (no date) 1950 M1 Middle East Bedouin MJ4

True Bedu coffee is strong, devoid of milk or sugar but flavoured with herbs; and its consumption is the occasion of much social activity—the rounding off of the day, and an opportunity for discussion, and the reception of guests. For the Badawin, if not for city dwellers, coffee is truly the 'wine of Islam', and the equipment of all Badawin households includes at least one carpet, which is spread before the hearth, a mortar, and coffee pots and cups. A few cooking pots, and one or two large trays and bowls for communal eating make up the remainder of the culinary equipment.

Clothing of the Badawin is simple. A long robe of thick material is the principal, sometimes in fact the only, garment. In winter a waterproof cloak of woven camel hair is worn. A voluminous headcloth, held in place by a rope or band, is wound round the head so as to give protection to the face and neck, and rawhide, heelless sandals are worn on the feet.

Water is usually too precious for much washing[1]—indeed, the Koran permits the ceremonial use of sand in the daily ablutions which are enjoined on all Moslems—and animal urine is frequently used as a substitute. Badawin food is monotonous and scanty. Most important are milk products: curds, buttermilk, various kinds of cheese—of which *labné*, a kind of cream cheese, is the most widespread—and *samné*, or butter. In addition, wheat, barley, and occasionally a little rice are obtained by barter, blackmail, or brigandage from agriculturalists, or else grown very sporadically by the nomads themselves.[2] Small amounts of dried fruit, usually dates, are also eaten. Meat is provided only as a great luxury, since animals themselves are in effect a kind of fixed capital—owners must live from the yield, not upon the animal itself. Apart, then, from occasions of high festival, when special slaughtering takes place, only those animals that die naturally are eaten.

Meals are served first to the older men of the tent, each man using his dagger as a knife, and fingers as a fork,[3] after which, when they are satisfied, it is the turn of the younger men and boys. Later still come the women, and finally the girls—the sexes never intermingling during meals. On occasion when supplies are plentiful, the Badawin

[1] It has been said of a present-day certain Wahhabi tribe of Arabia that all adult members have at least once in their lifetime been forced to exist on water taken from the hump of a camel.

[2] Patches of ground are roughly sown with grain, and later in the year tribesmen return to harvest the crop.

[3] As far as possible, use of the left hand is avoided in polite Arab society—this hand is employed for menial and unpleasant tasks.

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
Bedouins MJ4

meekly handed over the watch, which Ali put on his own wrist. "Let me take care of it for thee," he said to me, in his protective manner. He is actually "taking care" of my watch to this very day!

Our Fid'an hosts numbered seventeen horsemen and eight camel-riders, who had come on the scene after the attack on us. A gang of typical desert outlaws.

At the evening meal they spread a large leather camel-saddle cover for a tablecloth. Previously the dough for our bread had been kneaded on it. At other times it served as manger and watering-trough for the horses and camels, for it could be suspended by leather loops, one at each of the four corners.

The *Akid* poured sour camels' milk from a goat skin into a wooden basin and handed it round. The few *dhaluls* were lying close to us. The red campfire threw a glow of light over them and their long shadows melted into the blackness of the night. For a moment I imagined myself surrounded by strange monsters.

When I closed my eyes and heard only the belching and grunting of my table-companions, I could scarcely distinguish them from the camels chewing the cud. And Ali was the noisiest feeder of them all!

Next morning the Fid'ans proposed that they should join us with the idea of entering Ruala territory and lifting some camels. Nothing remained for Ali and myself but to make the best of these unwelcome proposals. We had to endure their company in the pious hope that somewhere we should fall in with the Ruala Bedouins.

Two days later we camped at the well of Al-Hajal,

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

its small well-bred face to my mouth for a kiss—really for a date, 231
which I had not got.

Next the new watch-dog, a fierce and shaggy brute, is produced and shown to me. I praise it in suitable terms to express the hope that he will keep off wolves. The women now go, whilst I wash and get into my warm Gilgit boots and prepare for the evening meal.

It is night. I have just had the most delightful dinner I have ever 262
tasted. Only Amsha's skilled hand could have prepared it. A dish of rice stewed with raisins and onion shreds, and on top a perfectly formed baby lamb which has not yet eaten grass. How good it was, and how soft and luscious! My two *gátas* (dividing curtains) have 000
been furled inwards and tied to the centre rope so as to form a cosy room.

A lantern is burning at the far end. The remains of my dinner are aken away. Salim has just brought coffee again. I ask Salim if the needs of my two men have been attended to, and he replies that they have had a dinner similar to mine, and are preparing to turn in. "Have they had coffee?" I ask. "Yes, Abu Sa'ud, they have had coffee. May 521
the women come and talk to you before you go to sleep?" he asks. I agree, for it is only 8 p.m. and far too early to think of turning in. Amsha and her friends again creep in and sit down. This time Salim is with them, but not Hussa. She is staying with the little black children and putting them to sleep in her tent.

Presently they ask me for the news of Kuwait, and they in turn give me all the Badawin gossip that has come their way since they arrived. They go through the names of everyone camped within 10 miles of them, and Salim tells of raids and counter-raids in distant Najd, the doings of So-and-So, the plans of the King (Bin Sa'ud), and of how careful he must be not to get into trouble with Yaman.* "Believe me, Ya Abu Sa'ud, the Imam Yahya, is very strong and has wonderful arms and infernal machines at his disposal. Why, he even has metal walking-chickens which he sends by the thousand into his enemy's camp by night, and as soon as they get among the troops they explode and kill very many with each explosion. *Wallah* (by God) it is true! Have I not myself seen men killed in this way? Have I not just returned from Riyadh and seen bits of exploded chickens

* This scene took place just before Bin Sa'ud's Yaman adventure of 1934.

l: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

Joys of Cold Weather

there is a stir in the Badawin world. Suhail (Canopus) has also been* seen, low down in the southern horizon, which to the Badawin means the end of the dread summer, for man and beast then need less to drink. Even the blood grows cooler of a sudden.

A general cheerfulness now takes hold of the Badawin tent-dweller. He has safely weathered one more dread summer, the life-giving rains are coming and with them abundance once again. He joyfully packs up his belongings and by the 15th of October is ready to move. The end of the month sees him gone, rain or no rain. At first he does not go too far from water, for his camels, sheep and mares must still be watered frequently.

With the first fall of rain, however, he is gone on his great annual migration, or, to be more accurate, his grand circular tour. The various sections of the tribe now move together or follow each other from grazing ground to grazing ground, till they have systematically passed over and eaten down all the *'arfaj*, *nassi* and *hamdh* grasses that the rains have brought in their train. Should rains be delayed in a particular area, the tribe skip it and pass on to where the country has become green. The night lightning and the heavy bank of clouds seen of an evening far away on the horizon are their surest guides.

Certain areas are known to be nearly always good in autumn, and to these the shaikhs will usually take their own best camels with them.

This moving in the wake of the grazing is spread over November, December, January, February, March and April, till by May all nomad households are once more beginning to converge slowly on to water. It is a sad period, this having to go, so to speak, "home again" after the glorious annual holiday. During the migration months the tribal tents change ground about every ten days, both for sanitary reasons and because the grass has been eaten up—so the moves are slow, leisurely and pleasant. Nor are distances to the next camp great. It is a period of joy for all, women renew their winter garments, make *leben*, wear their best frocks and amuse themselves among the flowers. The better-off men hawk the lesser bustard (*hubara*), hunt gazelle

* In Najd Canopus is usually seen between 1st September and 10th September. In Kuwait if the sky is clear it is seen any time after the 10th September, and at about 3.30 a.m., very low down in the south over the Brasi Gate.

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(*dhabi*) and generally lead a lazy gossiping life, fattening themselves on fresh *leben*, camel's milk and dates. Should the tribe be at war, then of course this utopian existence is at once changed, and the tribe moves from ground to ground, concentrated closely and prepared for all eventualities. The Badawin's wonderful methods for obtaining and passing on news, especially of an alarming nature, now come into play. If danger is in the air, he knows it days and even weeks before, and takes necessary precautions. It almost seems as if he were able to smell danger. Then he gets out his rifle and burnishes it and assembles his cartridges. The shaikh now, of course, leads the tribe on its march to fresh grazing and selects every site for the tribal camp. His word is law when the safety of the community is at stake.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SHAIKH AND HOW IT IS MAINTAINED

No tribal shaikh holds his position simply because his father was the shaikh before him. In other words, the shaikhship does not necessarily pass from father to eldest son. It does, however, remain in the family, whether it be the shaikhship of a tribal section or that of all-paramount shaikh, the leader of the whole tribe. For instance, the shaikh of the Mutair tribe must always be chosen from the Al Dushan or royal clan; but the heir apparent who wants to succeed his father and become shaikh after him must prove:

that he has the necessary courage;
that he has powers of leadership;
that he has *hadi* or luck.

The Badawin has no use for a man having courage and leadership in plenty if *hadi* is lacking. A lucky general is what the tribesman wants in war, and, still more important, he wants a lucky shaikh in peace, for to him the whole daily round and welfare of the tribe is bound up in this word *hadi*. The great Bin Sa'ud, the present Lord of Sa'udi Arabia, owes his greatness to his having been blessed with a large quantity of *hadi*, or so says and believes every Badawin of Arabia. He has other notable attributes, of course, but these cannot be compared with the all-embracing Luck.

The shaikh cannot, on the other hand, say to the tribe that he

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511 what the world would call honest methods. Hence if he cannot live on somebody's largesse he must steal or raid. He cannot spin, to work [461] he is ashamed. If he is forbidden to raid (as is the case under Bin Sa'ud's regime to-day), the fight for life is a particularly severe one, when he is not provided with an occupation to enable him to earn. Year in, year out, the poorer type of Badawin—and there are many tens of thousands of such—never gets a "square" meal according to our standards. He probably has meat only when he can cadge it off somebody more fortunate than himself, or when his shaikh gives a dinner party.

262 His own food for most of the year consists of only camel's milk and a handful of dates per day. The camel-herd gets even less than this.

291 The Badawin's clothes are on the same scanty scale as his food, a thin cotton *dishdásha* (smock), replaced only when it falls off his back with age, and a threadbare *'abba* (cloak), *kuffiyah* and thin rope *agal* (head cloth and head cord), are all he has to cover his ill-nourished body. Yet all this makes for toughness and hardihood, and the average [132] Badawin seems made of steel. The lack of warm clothing is probably the hardest thing in life that he has to bear, for in winter the temperature often falls below freezing point, and the winds are of ice, and cut the body through and through. I have never in my life felt so cold as in the desert a hundred miles inland of Kuwait when a *yáhi* or *jahali* 262 wind has been blowing in December or January. Yet in spite of the 574 hard life, the Badawin is never in danger of actual starvation or of dying from want. His *ahl* (family) would never permit this, nor would the system of affording three days' hospitality to all and sundry —such a splendid feature of democratic Arabia—allow of a man reaching such straits. A person who is down and out, without a penny to his name, would in reality be far worse off in London than in Arabia, where he could always hope to find a black tent or two to sponge on.

[181] A Badawin's dream and ambition in life is to possess about a dozen 231 camels, next a wife, and afterwards a mare, half a hundred sheep and a *saláfi*—I am, of course, assuming that he starts with a rifle and a *dhalúl* (riding camel). Give the desert man these essentials and he is a made man, for both camels and sheep double themselves in three years. Any male lambs that are born, he kills for food, the females he

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854 used by the northern Badawin of Arabia, who carry their children on their shoulders or, when travelling, on their hips. The *miḥad* is not to be confused with the *laḥḥa*.

Laḥḥa—Baby's hammock for use inside tent. It is slung between two tent poles. Especially favoured in the north.

262 *Hail*—cardamum seeds for putting in coffee.

Masmār—cloves, for putting in coffee.

Zafrān—saffron, for putting in tea and coffee.

492 *Shiskar*—hooks on each side of the *mahar* to hang women's saddle-bags on.

THE LOOM—MATTÁRIH, MATTU OR SADY

236 The loom gear consists of seven pieces which altogether are known as *matarik*.

(1) Piece of wood known as *ga'ak*.
(2) Shuttle known as *misha*.
(3) Tightener known as *mishirra*.
(4) Piece of wood holding up threads known as *minyar*.
(5) Circular wooden supports of *minyar*, known as *marakib*.
(6) Piece of wood holding ends of threads known as *al ras*.
(7) Gazelle horn for pulling down threads known as *middrak*.

SKIN CONTAINERS

415 These consist of:

(*a*) Water skins.
(*b*) Skin bags for storing *dakan*, coffee beans, dates, etc.

Under (*a*) we get the *rdwi*, the *shilauki*, *minde* and common *girba* (*jirba*).

Rdwi is the generic term for a water receptacle made out of a camel's skin.
Thilauki is the name given to a water receptacle made out of one half of a camel skin doubled over and sewn together.
Minde is a gigantic water receptacle made out of the two side skins of a camel sewn together. They are always very water-tight.
Girba is an ordinary water skin made out of a whole sheep's or goat's skin which is peeled off the animal. The best and most lasting are made from goats' skins (males) and cost in the rough about Rs.1/8 each. Sheepskins do not last.

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CHAPTER XII

Food and Hospitality

262 The well-to-do Badawin, such as our man Salim al Muzaiyin or the shaikh of a tribe, has one square meal a day, usually in the evening. This consists of plain rice cooked in *semen* (ghi), a few dates dipped in butter, some *leben* (butter-milk), finishing up with coffee. In the early morning he starts the day with some *leben* and dates, also coffee. He does not often eat meat himself, because he cannot afford to do so. Should a guest of standing arrive, the host will always kill a sheep or lamb for him, which goes the round of the family after the guest has had his share.

The poor Badawin, and the great majority of Badawin are poor, get one meal a day consisting of dates and camel's milk, with a very occasional dish of plain rice or a piece of bread.

The very poor Badawin, such as the herdsman (*shâdwi*) who tends the sheep or camels of the more fortunate, gets nothing but camel's milk. Very rarely he gets some dates also, and still more rarely a bit of rice and meat when his shaikh or employer has a guest, his share being the entrails of the sheep that has been killed.

Speaking generally, in the province of Hasa rice is eaten where possible in preference to bread. The opposite is the case in inner Najd, Qasim, etc. The reason is obvious: wheat is grown in Najd and rice has to be transported there. The Badawin, like all other Muslims, eats with his right hand only and gives it a cursory wash before starting his meal. He is always hungry, and as a result if he can get such things as locusts, edible monitors (*dhab*), game of any sort and even foxes, he will eat them with relish. Speaking generally, the Badawin proper will eat anything that comes his way, especially if no one is looking, though he must always ceremonially cut the throat of any animal or bird he snares or shoots, saying as he does this: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful" (*B'ismi'llah al Rahman al Rahim*).

[pages 187 and 188 contain no textual material]

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B 264 After the meal is over, though he ought to wash his hands, he rarely does so, owing to shortage of water. He prefers to wipe his hands on the tent and later in his beard. The 'Ajman tribe pride themselves in being able to show grease hand-marks on their tents; these indicate "hospitality". Bread is rarely eaten except among the well-to-do Badawin, though of course if bread is available any man will eat it with pleasure.

B 262

Mushrooms (*fuṭr*) and truffles (*faqaʿ*) are eagerly sought for and eaten in the rainy season, but these are a luxury.

On special occasions the Badawin gets camel's meat, if for instance his shaikh is entertaining. The "hump" especially is considered a great delicacy in the cold weather. I have not infrequently eaten camel's meat myself and found it rather coarse and leathery, but the Badawin loves it.

K 762 In Kuwait town and among the town-dwellers of Najd, camel's meat and beef are regularly eaten during the winter months. Both are said to keep a person warm, and the former to make him strong.

B 262 574 Every Badawin, whether rich or poor, must entertain and feed a stranger who asks for a night's lodging. If such guest be a big man and his host is fairly well to do, a sheep is invariably killed and served up with rice, sprinkled with sultanas, almonds and a few onion shavings.

If the guest is a poor nomad Badawin, the guest will be given a dinner of plainly cooked rice and some dates and *leben*. Should the host himself be very poor, he will still take the traveller in, and do the very best he can for him, even if he has only a few dates to offer; but entertain him he must, that is, give him food and a night's shelter.

B 574 Should a shaikh or well-to-do person visit a poor man's tent and ask for hospitality, he is expected to reward his host, either on leaving or on reaching home, with either a money present or a *kiswah* (present of clothing). This is the invariable custom.

Should a traveller pass a tent with only women in it, the head of the tent being away, say tending sheep or camels, the principal woman of the tent will come out, and stand in front of her tent with a bowl of *leben*, a signal to the passer-by to come and refresh himself. If an important cavalcade passes by, and the lady of the tent desires to attract their attention and get them to come and partake of her bounty,

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Camel Diet

CAMEL FOOD

238 The staple food of the camel is the *nassi* grass, the *'arfaj* bush of the desert, and when in season wild flowers and grasses of every description. The first two grow in profusion over Central and North-Eastern Arabia after good rains. Camels near the Euphrates thrive on a thorny bush known as *a'agul*—but this does not suit the desert camel.

The salt diet of the camel is found in the *rimth*, *thamran*, *'ardd*, *'ajrum* and *gaghraf* bushes, all known under the generic term of *hamdh*.

The camel is also very fond of dates, which are given him with milk when he is being prepared for long and arduous work. He of course eats the date stones with relish.

A dainty dish for a sick camel is dates and barley mixed with milk into a mush, and followed by Arab bread broken up into small pieces.

CAMEL FLESH

●262 Camels' meat is not unpleasant and is rather like coarse beef. It is widely eaten, especially in November and December, when sheep are in poor condition for lack of grass. Camels' meat is supposed to be good for man during the cold weather and to supply warmth.

Among the Badawin, camels are often killed on feast days or for rejoicing on festive occasions. I have found the hump to be the most edible part of the camel, and this is also the Arab opinion.

Camels' milk is, of course, universally drunk throughout Arabia. It is extremely nourishing, but contains no cream, and therefore yields no butter. It has a slightly purgative effect on most people, and Europeans should be careful not to indulge too freely in the desert.

GEAR FOR CAMEL TRAVEL (see Chapter V)

492 The main necessaries for a journey by camel are:

The camel saddle with two tall pommels fore and aft.
The large saddle bags hanging down on both sides of the saddle.
The finely-worked leather apron which hangs down in front of a camel's saddle and stretches down both sides of the camel's neck nearly to its knees.

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Edible Locusts

ME 136

I am aware, of course, that the locust also enters Palestine and Northern Hijaz probably via Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula, and also crosses the Red Sea, north of Jiddah, but I think it is recognised that the main swarms and visitations come from the direction of Abyssinia and South-West Arabia.

I am not competent to enter into a discussion on the various species of locust. The flying ones we see and know in Kuwait and North-East Arabia are of two main types, the carmine or red-coloured ones known locally as the *Yakhakh** (*Nomadacris septemfasciata*) and the Common Desert Yellow variety with brown markings (*Schistocerca gregaria*) known as *Jarád*. The red locust is the kind most eaten by the inhabitants of Arabia. They eat only the females—and quite good they are, fried in butter with salt, or boiled. They taste much like roast chestnuts, and no doubt one pleasure the Arab has in eating them is the feeling that he is avenging himself for all the damage the insect has done him—at least this is what my Badawin friends say, and I can understand it.

B 262

ME 131

Of recent years most important work has been done by the Belgian, French, British, Spanish and Italian Governments in the matter of Locust Research and Control, and the urgent necessity of co-ordinating the work of these various Governments has been fully recognised.

On 29th April, 1929, the late Earl Balfour, then Chairman of the Committee of Civil Research, appointed a Sub-committee on Locust Control, with directions to consider and report on (*a*) the best means for the destruction of the Desert Locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*), and (*b*) methods for ascertaining the reasons for the periodic swarming of this species, with a view to its control. This Committee, between 1929 and 1935, compiled six or seven reports which made interesting reading, and the value of the work already done by it is incalculable.

K 654

We in Kuwait, and by this I mean the Ruler and his Government, are particularly grateful to Mr. B. P. Uvarov, Senior Assistant, Imperial Institute of Entomology, London, a member of the above Committee, for the unsolicited advice and help which he has given in locust-control during the last few years. I personally am doubly grateful for

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* Strictly speaking this is the name given to any kind of grasshopper, which is *haram* (unlawful) to eat as opposed to the locust proper, which is *halál* (lawful). The red locust is definitely *halál*.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait MI
Bedouins MJ4
Saudi Arabia MJ1

will rush at man, emitting a fierce hissing sound like a cobra. It can move very fast when in flight. It is the great enemy of the dhub lizard, which it attacks at sight, and three times out of four defeats and kills it after a battle of giants. K 136 SA 136

The wurral's bite is said by all the Badawins to be poisonous, but it only occasionally kills a human being. Its bite causes great pain, and a person bitten gets no relief "either from shade or sun" (to use a Badawin expression). The wurral is considered unclean and is not eaten, it is rather preserved because it rids the neighbourhood of snakes. The wurral feeds on grass (*'arkib*), snakes and insects, and like the dhub is very fond of locusts. [B - 262]

In 1933, during the flight of a swarm of locusts west of Jahrah near Al Atraf, I saw five wurral and three dhubs, all full sized, madly rushing about and jumping into the air catching the flying insects. I was in a car with my wife, and we stopped and watched them for twenty minutes, at a distance of less than fifty yards. In their excitement they forgot all about fear of the car and human beings.

The wurral is sandy coloured and has a long, powerful but smooth tail, salmon coloured but verging into scarlet near the tip. Round the tail is a series of dark rings. It has a cream belly, and possesses no scales.

After the dhub, the wurral's chief enemy is the snake, non-poisonous or poisonous, which it eats. If bitten by a poisonous snake, it is said straightway to go off to the *rumrām* bush, and roll itself well in the bush and eat some of the leaves. This is said by the Badawin to act as an antidote to the snake's poison. In any case, the wurral apparently comes to no harm if bitten by the most poisonous of snakes. From watching the wurral's methods and its ability to escape the consequences of the snake's poison by eating and rolling in the *rumrām* bush, the Badawin has learned to value the *rumrām* as an anti-snake medicine, apparently with satisfactory results. The *rumrām* is the *Helleropsium cigneum* of the botanist. [B 752]

THE DHUB, OR SPIDER-TAILED MONITOR

This interesting lizard is known by its snub-nosed head, and massive tail covered with horny spikes, which forms its main defensive weapon.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait MI 1
Bedouins MI6
Saudi Arabia MI 3

'Anizah Taboo

K 136 SA 136

It is found over the whole of North-Eastern Arabia, and prefers hard gravelly ground to loose sand. It lives in a hole, anything up to 4 feet in depth, which it excavates in spiral fashion. It is a common sight to see this animal basking in the summer sun close to its hole, and silently diving into its recess on the approach of danger. It disappears entirely during the winter months and reappears during the late spring and summer months, so it would seem to hibernate. It grows to a length of approximately 3 feet, and is very fierce.

Its greatest enemy is the wurral, or snake-headed monitor. The dhub has an ordinary-shaped tongue, and is armed with a row of vicious-looking sharp teeth, but its principal weapon of defence is its tail.

It has long, sharp claws and a white stomach, and hisses loudly when angry. When it first appears in spring, after hibernation, it is brilliant yellow-ochre in colour, and as summer arrives it develops a grey-green tint with pale yellow bands across its back. Rings of the same pale yellow go round its tail between rows of spikes.

Its name is not to be confused with *dibb*, the Badawin name for snake, or with *dhabi*, a gazelle.

The dhub lays between fifty and sixty eggs at a time in the sand, and covers them up. When the young are about to hatch, the mother is said to come back again and eat them all up except three, which she places on her back—one on her head, one on the middle of her back and one on her tail. This curious story is vouched for by the Badawin, but I have so far failed to find a dhub lizard with young, and cannot verify the statement.

The dhub will eat a certain amount of grass, but its natural food is obviously grasshoppers and other insects. It certainly devours voraciously any locusts that it comes across. All Badawin consider it fit for food.

B 262 G9 T34

Throughout Arabia there is a saying that the dhub is held in special sanctity by the 'Anizah tribe. Certain it is that no member of that tribe will kill, much less eat, this lizard.

Hence when wanting to annoy or anger an 'Anizah tribesman, rival Badawin will say that the dhub is his ancestor (*Ab dhub fidd al 'Aruq*). This jibe refers to the story that an 'Anizah ancestor was

they must leave their rifles at a police post, but once they have climbed back on to the escarpment they are free to do as they like, subject only to the restraints of tribal life. Similarly, while they are inside the towns of Inner Oman, where the Imam has established law and order, they must behave themselves, but once they are outside the walls they can only be controlled by diplomacy and not by force, while everywhere in the Dhahirah of Northern Oman jealous and often hostile sheikhs vie with each other in the lavishness of their hospitality and the scale of their gifts to win the support of the Badu. There no sheikh can enforce his authority over the tribes, and none of them would try, lest by doing so he should alienate their support in time of need.

To understand the Badu character and way of life you must understand the land in which they live—a harsh, unforgiving land which conditions their lives so that they, too, are hard, hard in body and mind. They live in the desert—that is to say, in country which, judged by ordinary standards, is waterless. This applies equally to the barren, broken limestone mountains near the southern coast, to the flat, featureless gravel plains, and to the sands of the Empty Quarter itself, where the mountainous dunes, some of which are 700 feet high, run one behind the other for hundreds of miles. There are, of course, some wells in this desert, but they are usually few and far between; the Sa'ar country has two permanent wells in it, Manwakh and Zamakh; the Manahil country has three or four. Thus in an area the size of Norfolk there might be two wells. I have myself twice travelled four hundred miles between wells. I admit that this is exceptional, but Badu have raided across these very stretches of desert, riding out and back again without touching at a well. You can think what this means when you realize that this distance is twice as far as from Dover to Edinburgh, and that these Arabs travelled at a speed of three miles per hour, relying only on the water which they could carry with them without foundering their camels, and that the camels themselves did not get a drink until they returned a month later.

It seldom rains in this desert; in many parts it has not rained for five years, and I have been in places where not a drop of rain has fallen for twenty-five years. By Badu standards a couple of hours' heavy rain in the year means a good year. They cannot, therefore, cultivate, but have to depend for their livelihood on their small herds of camels, and in quest of the pasturage which springs up after rain they travel great distances. Most of this vegetation is not grass, but desert plants like the succulent yellow-flowering tribulus and heliotrope, and in the sands these plants will remain green after a few days' rain for as long as three and four years. But they do not last so long on the gravel plains and among the hills; in such places, however, grow scattered trees and bushes, such as the acacias, which afford valuable pasturage. Where there is rich grazing the Badu can remain for six and even nine months without water, for their camels get all the moisture they require from these green plants, and camels' milk suffices the Arabs themselves for food and drink. In the heat of summer the camels must be watered once a week, and if there is no well near the grazing on which they have wintered they must move back on to a permanent well and graze their herds as best they can on the

13: Thesiger T-3 (ca. 1949) 1950 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

drought-resisting trees and shrubs, which will at any rate keep them alive. Under such circumstances the milk supply gets very short and the Arabs suffer much from hunger, for milk is their staple food. Among the Badu in South-Western Arabia dates are a rare luxury, meat is seldom eaten except by guests for whom an animal has been slaughtered, and all grain has to be purchased in the villages.

You can see that it is a hard life with absolutely no margin. Hunger and thirst, heat and cold—bitter cold. Few people realize how cold it can be in these Arabian deserts. In summer the temperature rises to 120° in the shade, and there really is no shade, and the only water which these Badu have to drink is brackish and tastes like a strong dose of Epsom salts. In winter it is nearly freezing, and at night a herdsboy will scrape a shallow trench in the sand, lie down naked in it and then cover himself with his shirt. It certainly is a desperately hard life, and it is made even harder by continuous raiding and counter-raiding. Everyone is living the whole time in a state of suspense with his rifle in his hand and his eyes scanning the horizon. A herdsman sees some mounted Arabs in the distance and immediately collects his camels, which are never very numerous, and drives them off as fast as he can, for no one can afford to take any chances. If the people he has seen are friends they will signal by throwing up sand into the air or send one person forward alone waving his headcloth. Then, having established contact, they will ride over, ask the news—for Badu are always anxious to have the latest news—and let their mounts graze while they refresh themselves with the milk which the herdsman provides. Generally, to keep their herds alive at all on the scanty grazing, the Badu must scatter widely, and can put up no resistance against a raiding party which may be as many as two hundred strong. All they can do is to try to drive off their camels at the first hint of danger and, if they are robbed but themselves escape, collect their friends and set off in pursuit. The raiders consequently work fast, gather what spoil they can, and disappear. Sometimes, especially if the raid has failed and if they are pursued, they have a desperate time getting back, and, should there be a blood feud between the two tribes, they can expect no mercy if they are overtaken. I heard of one party of raiders who had raided four hundred miles, had failed to get any loot, and who, to keep themselves alive on their way back, had cut off and eaten the tails and ears of their camels. Sometimes a pursuit party from the steppes follows the raiders far into sands which are unknown to them. Should a strong wind get up and blow out the tracks, they may be lost, unable to follow the raiders to the wells which lie ahead, and unable to retrace their own tracks home. Yet ordinarily the Badu are not afraid of thirst. More than once they have told me that in winter it would be hunger, not thirst, which would kill them if they were left without food or water. This is an instance of Badu exaggeration, but I have met Arabs who have lasted as long as seven days without either food or water.

Many of them are wonderful trackers, for their very lives depend upon the accuracy with which they can read such signs. I remember once when I was riding across the desert with some of them how we came upon some half-obliterated marks in the sand. One of our party turned aside and

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(Above) *One of the small black Aïab tents pitched near Mamwakh well. This type belongs exclusively to sand-dwelling tribes and is never used on the steppes or plateaux. Beside the tent stands its owner, who wears the long pointed sleeves of a Western Arab; in front, placed upside-down, is a leather trough from which his camels are watered. Round the Mamwakh encampment romped Arab children, a hardy lot: even in winter months, when the desert cold is intense, the little girls wear (left) only a fringe round their hips. The children are fed mainly on camels' milk and hoorsheg or bread made of millet consumed from the more inhabitary sections of the Sa'ar tribe*

T 896 (B)

221 camps move to the Euphrates, or on to the main groups of wells around which cluster tented towns of hundreds of families, odd Sulubba families will remain far out in the desert, [312] drinking from some tiny water hole in a lonely ravine known only to the Sulubba themselves. There they will live almost the lives of wild animals, with only a few sheep or donkeys, hunting gazelle and often dressing in their skins.

224 The Sulubba alone knows the wild animal life [262] of the desert intimately. As a gazelle hunter, 290 463 his skill is incredible, and many live very largely on gazelle meat and dress in their skins. The Beduins often employ the Sulubba as guides in the desert or consult them regarding routes, grazing, or camping grounds.

433 Apart from hunting gazelle, and menial work 251 for the Beduins, the Sulubba also live by grazing and breeding animals. Some of them are prosperous and own large flocks of sheep. They have a few camels, but their most distinctive possessions are the white asses. Probably the Sulubba originally bred asses rather than camels for riding purposes, because if they had any good camels the Beduins were likely to covet them. But since no Beduin would stoop to ride an ass, the Sulubba were left in undisputed possession. Some of these animals have marvellously swift paces, and are almost as capable of resisting thirst as is the camel.

721 During the last ten years, the desert belong- 198 ing to Iraq, Syria, and Trans-Jordan has been brought under Government control. As a result the Beduins are no longer able to bully the Sulubba quite as unrestrainedly as before and the latter are learning to complain to the police when they are beaten or abused.

563 In 1919-22, the recrudescence of Wahhabism 797 in central Arabia produced a tremendous outburst 721